

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4154

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

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E. O. 11652: NA

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SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OFFICERS FOR 1973

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

REF: VIENTIANE 3594

1. IN THE MAY 12 ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE SEVENTH ASSEMBLY, THE SANANIKONE FACTION RETAINED ITS CONTROL OF THE ASSEMBLY AS REFLECTED:

A) BY PHOUI SANANIKONE' S OWN WINNING VOTE FOR RE-ELECTION AS ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT. UNLIKE LAST YEAR, PHOUI HAD NO OPPOSITION AND THE 46 VOTES HE RECEIVED IN SECRET BALLOTING FROM 55 DEPUTIES PRESENT CLEARLY REAFFIRMED HIS UNCHALLENGED STRENGTH; AND

B) BY SOLID HOLD THAT DEPUTIES FAVORING SANANIKONE FACTION CONTINUE TO HAVE ON MOST COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS. THREE OF THE EIGHT COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS WERE CHANGED; AND TWO OF THESE POSITIONS WENT TO PRO- SANANIKONE DEPUTIES (KHORANHOK SOUVANNAVONG FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND XAY
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OUNAROM FOR FINANCE/ BUDGET).

2. ASSEMBLY VICE PRESIDENT CHAO SOPSAISANA ALSO SHOWED HE RETAINS CONSIDERABLE FOLLOWING IN ASSEMBLY. HE WON RE- ELECTION WITHOUT OPPOSITION AND ON SECRET BALLOT GOT 41 VOTES-- ONLY FIVE FEWER THAN PHOU. MOREOVER, AMONG THE FIVE NEW MEMBERS ON THE STANDING COMMITTEE, AT LEAST THREE ARE INCLUDED IN THE SOPSAISANA CIRCLE (LY TOU YIA, PHOM BOUNLUTAY AND BOUNTHAN HEUANGPRASEUTH). IN THIS CONNECTION, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT TWO OF THE FIVE NEW MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE COME FROM XIENG KOUANG PROVINCE (INCLUDING ONE MEO); THIS CONSTITUTES ANOTHER WELCOME SIGN OF A DEEPER INVOLVEMENT IN ASSEMBLY BUSINESS OF DEPUTIES ASSOCIATED WITH GENERAL VANG PAO.

3. BASICALLY, HOWEVER, THE MESSAGE OF THE ELECTIONS WAS " LITTLE CHANGE" IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSEMBLY. THE OLD CONSTELLATIONS OF POWER REMAIN, PERHAPS SOMEWHAT RE- ENFORCED, WHICH ALSO SUGGESTS CONTINUANCE OF THE INDIF- FERENT, SOMETIMES CAPRICIOUS, CONDUCT OF THE ASSEMBLY.

4. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE NEWLY- ELECTED COMMITTEE CHAIR- MEN HAVE, DURING THE PAST WEEK, CHOSEN THE MEMBERS OF THEIR COMMITTEES; BUT NO DATE HAS YET BEEN SET FOR AN ASSEMBLY WORKING SESSION TO APPROVE THE SELECTIONS. ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT PHOU WENT TO BANGKOK MAY 16 FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT AND IS EXPECTED TO REMAIN THERE UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH. IN HIS ABSENCE AND WITH FEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT' S NEGOTIATION WITH THE LPF, THE ASSEMBLY' S PACE WILL PROBABLY BE RATHER RELAXED. DEAN

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